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AUTHOR Curran, James P.; Johnson, Charles D.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of these two studies was to explore the relationship between sex role differences and interpersonal attraction in the dating dyad. A computer dating service was established in order to match subjects for a date. The independent measures utilized in these studies consisted of the Motivational Analysis Test (MAT) and the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF). In addition to completing these two tests, subjects were requested to state their preferences for an ideal data on a 10-point bipolar scale. Subjects filled out the dependent measure (The Date Evaluation Scale) immediately after the date. Results from the study indicated that a female's primary motive in the dating situation was mate selection (career, parent), but a male's primary motive was recreation (mating drives, narcism). The author concludes that the two studies partially support the notion that attraction in the dating dyad may be due, in part, to the fulfillment of traditional role expectations. (Author/PC)

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The Ideal Date:

Do People Know What They Want?

by

James P. Curran
Purdue University

and

Charles D. Johnson
Michigan State University

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Introduction

Role theorist (Tharp, 1963, 1964; Rosow, 1957) have long advocated the importance of role fulfillment in fostering interpersonal attraction. The purpose of these two studies was to explore the relationship between sex role differences and interpersonal attraction in the dating dyad. A secondary purpose of these studies was to examine the method of requesting subjects to state their role ideals as a means of determining the relationship between role fulfillment and attraction.

Method

Subjects and Procedure

The procedure for both studies was identical in nature. A computer dating service called Psych-A-Date was established in order to match subjects for a date. Subjects were recruited by means of advertisements in the school's newspaper and notices posted in public places on the university campus. These notices instructed potential subjects as to the time and place of the testing sessions. During the testing sessions, the operational procedures of Psych-A-Date were explained to the subjects, and they were administered a battery of tests.

Each subject was notified of his or her date's name, address and telephone number via a postcard approximately two weeks after the testing period. It was the responsibility of the dating couple to make arrangements for the date. During the initial testing session, subjects were given the dependent measure (The Date Evaluation Scale) and instructed to fill out the scale immediately after the date and return it to the experimenter to receive a refund.

All subjects were matched in accordance with the following three conditions: a) the male was as old as or older than the female; b) the male was as tall as or taller than the female and c) the female and the male were about the same in physical attractiveness as measured by objective raters (Curran, 1973a).

Subjects were undergraduate and graduate students at a large Mid-Western University. The majority of the subjects were between the ages of 17 to 25, and all subjects were Caucasian and native born citizens. In the first study, 92 couples were matched for a date, and 75 couples returned their dependent measures. In the second study, 137 couples were matched and 100 couples

returned the Date Evaluation Scale.

Measures

The independent measures utilized in these studies consisted of the Motivational Analysis Test - MAT (Cattell and Horn, 1961) and the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire - 16 PF (Cattell and Eber, 1968). The raw scores from these tests were converted into sten scores utilizing a normative table furnished by the publisher.

In addition to completing the MAT and 16 PF, subjects were requested to state their preferences for an ideal date. This was accomplished by having the subjects check on a 10-point bipolar scale where they wished their date to fall on each of the 16 PF and MAT dimensions.

The dependent measure consisted of a thirty item, multiple choice Date Evaluation Scale constructed for these studies. The Date Evaluation Scale has been factor analyzed several times and one of the factors, the interpersonal attraction factor, possesses good factorial and construct validity (Curran, 1973b). Items with good loading on the attraction factor are enjoyability of the date, liking for the dating partner, desire to date the partner again, desirability of the date as a marriage partner, desirability of that dating partner as a friend and the date favorably exceeding expectations. Subject's scores on the attraction factor were calculated by adding their raw scores on the above mentioned items.

Results

Sex Differences in Ideal Date Preferences

T-test were conducted between the means of the male and female ideal date ratings for each of 16 PF and MAT factors. Six consistent significant ($p < .05$ two tailed) differences between sexes was obtained in both studies. Female preferences for an ideal dating partner were higher than male preferences for an ideal dating partner on the dominance, career, parental and assertiveness factors. Male preferences were higher than the females on the mating drive and the premsia or sensitivity factor. Other sex differences were found in the first study and approached significance ($p < .10$) in the second study. Females rated their ideal dates higher on the ego (emotionally stable) and the superego (conscientious) factors than did the male subjects. Males rated their ideal date higher on the narcism or self indulgent factor

than the females.

These differences appear to reflect Skipper and Nass' (1966) conclusions that the females' primary motive in the dating situation was mate selection (career, parent), but the males' primary motive was recreation (mating drive, narcism).

Relationship Between Ideal Date and Interpersonal Attraction

The data was next analyzed to test the hypothesis that the closer a subject approximated his or her dating partner's ideal date, the more interpersonal attraction would be experienced. A subject's approximation to his or her partner's ideal date was calculated by means of the pattern similarity index (Rp) (Horn, 1961). Pattern similarity indicies were computed between a subject's actual sten scores on the 16 PF and MAT and his or her partner's preferences for an ideal date. Rp coefficients were also computed between a subject's actual sten scores and the average ideal date as indicated by all the male or all the female subjects. Correlation coefficients were then computed between these Rp coefficients and the dating partner's attraction score.

Table I contains the correlation matrix which indicates the relationships among the attraction scores and the Rp indicies representing the degree of approximation to the ideal date. None of the correlations were significant indicating no significant linear relationship between attraction and approximation to either the individuals partner's ideal date nor the average ideal date.

[Insert Table I about here]

Relationship Between Self Report Questionnaire Data and Interpersonal Attraction

Although interpersonal attraction was not related to sex role preferences in ideal dates, the data was analyzed to ascertain whether actual sex role differences were related to liking of the date.

Correlation coefficients were obtained (Table II) between a partner's attraction towards their date and their date's sten levels on the 16 PF and MAT factors. Table II contains only those factors which were significant in one or both of the studies. Three interesting sex role differences were found in both studies. Female attraction toward her date was positively

related to high male scores on the dominance and parmia factors and negatively related to high scores on the shrewdness factor. The converse was true for male attraction toward his date. It appears that females prefer males who are assertive, venturesome and natural, while males prefer females who are conforming, restrained and calculating. Female attraction toward her date was also positively related to male scores on autia (imaginative) and negatively related to male scores on guilt proneness (apprehensive).

There was not much correspondence between the actual sex role difference which was related to the attraction factor and what the subjects had stated as sex role difference preference in response to the ideal date questionnaire. The only exception was the sex role difference on the dominance factor. Females preferred their ideal date to have higher dominance scores than the male preference indicated and indeed high male dominance scores were related to female's attraction to their date while male attraction scores were negatively related to female dominance scores.

[Insert Table II about here]

Summary

In summary, these two studies do partially support the notion that attraction in the dating dyad may be in part due to the fulfillment of traditional role expectations. However, these studies do call into question the method of requesting subjects to state their role ideals as a method of determining the relationship between role fulfillment and attraction.

TABLE I

Correlations Among Attraction Scores and Indicies of Similarity Between Actual Date and Various Ideal Dates

Variables	1		2	
1 Male Attraction				
2 Female Attraction Score	.28	(.15)*		
3 Rp between female's profile and male average ideal date	.03	(.05)	.10	(.07)
4 Rp between female's profile and partner's ideal date	.17	(.09)	.04	(.03)
5 Rp between male's profile and female average ideal date	.04	(.01)	.09	(.06)
6 Rp between male's profile and partner's ideal date	.04	(.05)	.04	(.00)

* coefficient in parentheses are from study 2

TABLE II

Correlations Between a Partner's Attraction Toward Their Date And Their Date's Sten Level on the 16 PF and MAT Factors

Study 1

Factors	Correlation between male attraction and female sten level	Correlation between female attraction and male sten level	Z of difference
Sweetheart	.08	.13	n.s.
Dominance	-.28**	.27**	3.42***
Parmia	-.24**	.29**	3.29***
Autia	-.03	.27**	1.86*
Shrewdness	.14	-.28**	2.52**
Guilt proneness	-.07	-.22*	n.s.

Study 2

Factors	Correlation between male attraction and female sten level	Correlation between female attraction and male sten level	Z of difference
Sweetheart	.31***	.17*	n.s.
Dominance	-.34***	.25**	4.24***
Parmia	-.19*	.33***	3.77***
Autia	.01	.23**	n.s.
Shrewdness	.16	-.19*	2.42**
Guilt proneness	-.02	-.23**	n.s.

* $p < .05$ one tailed test

** $p < .05$ two tailed test

*** $p < .01$ two tailed test

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